

INDEX.

ACCOUNTS.

- Accounts, 8.
 — Uniform—and returns of railway corporations. (See Committee.)
 ADAMS, JULIUS W., on Committee, 35, 53.
 Additions to Library and Museum. (See Library.)
 — to List of Members. (See List.)
 Amendments to By-Laws (See By-Laws.) 26, 49, 51, 99, 110, 112.
 — to Constitution. (See Constitution.) 50, 51, 52, 86, 109, 110, 111, 121.
 American Society of Civil Engineers and its Future. By W. MILNOR ROBERTS, 48.
 Announcements.—5, 18, 22, 33, 42, 66, 78, 83, 97, 141.—Appendix to Transactions (Report of Chief Engineer New York and Brooklyn Bridge), 24.—Discussion on Cements requested, 141.—Donations to Library, 141.—Illustrations of papers, rules for, 78, 83, 141.—Information desired, 42.—Institution of Civil Engineers, 78.—Letter Ballots, regulations for their transmission, 141.—Meeting of Institute of Mining Engineers, 5, 18.—Meetings of Board of Direction, 5, 18, 22, 33, 42, 66, 78, 83.—Meetings of Society, 5, 18, 22, 33, 42, 66, 78, 83, 97.—Metric System of weights and measures, 98.—Ninth Annual Convention, 22.—Papers for Distribution, 78.—Papers for the Norman Medal, 23, 33, 42, 67, 78, 83.—Papers on Engineering subjects, 23, 33, 67, 83, 97, 141.—Papers presented, 66, 83, 97.—Papers received, 6, 18, 23, 33.—Postage rates, 5, 24, 33, 67.—Rooms of the Society, 33, 42, 67, 78, 83, 141.
 Annual Meeting. (See Minutes.)
 — Ninth, Convention. (See Convention.)
 — Report of Board of Direction.—(See Report.)
 Appendix to Transactions, 24, 116.
 Appropriations, 8, 27, 79.
 Ashtabula. (See Bridge.)
 ATKINSON, JOHN B., admitted as member, 98.

ATTENDANCE.

- Attendance—at Convention, 43—at Annual meeting, 105.
 Austrian Commission for International Exhibition, 85.
 AVERY, JOHN, Chairman of Committee, 99.
 Award by United States Centennial Commission, 26, 37.
 BACON, JOHN W.—Admitted as member, 84.
 Ballots, canvas of, 1, 101.—for members canvassed, 7, 25, 79, 85, 111.—For officers canvassed, 112.—Letter, form of, 69, 79.—Transmission of, 141.—Issued, 101.—On appointment of committee to report form of memorial in reference to metric system, 7.—On resolutions as to bridge inspections, 86.—On adoption of memorial, 88.—On appointment of Committee to consider System of Weights and Measures, 88.—On Conduct of Conventions, 89.
 Barataria Ship Canal, 45.
 BARNARD, F. A. P., Member of Board of Censors, 124.
 BARNARD, J. G., Member of Board of Censors, 124.
 BATTERSON, JAMES, G., admitted as Fellow, 6.
 BAYLEY, GEO. W. R., death announced, 1.—Discussion by, 47.—Memoir of, 48.—Paper by, 6, 114.
 BEEBOUT, E. N., communication from, 8.
 BENSON, FREDERICK S., admitted as member, 84.
 BILIN, CHARLES E., Letter from, 86.
 Board of Direction, Annual Report (See Report), 101, 102, 105, 113.—Minutes. (See Minutes.)
 — to test Iron, Steel and other Metals, report by Secretary, 19, 27, 108.
 BOGART, JOHN, Chairman of Committee, 49, 72, 111, 125.—Resident Secretary Centennial Commission, 72.—Secretary and Librarian, 112.—Secretary of Ninth Annual Convention, 44.—Treasurer, 106, 126.—Trustee, 106.
 BOLLER, ALFRED, P., Communication from, 27, 33.

BOOKS.

- Books on Engineering and Technology, List of.—3, 15, 20, 30, 37, 54, 75, 80, 91, 102, 127, 136.
- BOUSCAREN, G., description of bridge by, 52, 114—discussion by, 46—on committee, 48, 120.
- Bridge, Failure of, at Ashtabula (See Failure.) 7, 8, 19, 27, 45.
- Bridges, discussed, 45.—Inspection and tests of, 45, 52, 86, 87, 121.
- Relative quantities of material in Bridges of different kinds and various heights, by CHARLES E. EMERY, 46.—Part 2, 86.
- BURGESS, ROBERT, Discussion by, 45.—Letter from, 86.—On committee, 26, 120.
- BROOKS, FREDERICK, Letter from, 107. On committee, 26, 120.
- BROWN, CHARLES O., transferred from Junior to Member, 132.
- BRUSH, CHARLES B., Teller.—107.—Transferred from Associate to Member, 98.
- Brush Dams. By EDWARD P. NORTH, 35.
- BULLOCK, WILLIAM D., Admitted as Junior, 98.
- By-Laws, Amendments to, in relation to additions and amendments, 51, 111.
- In relation to nominations and voting for officers, 26, 49.—In relation to President and Vice-Presidents, 100, 111.—In relation to Special Committees, 112.—In relation to Treasurer, 99, 110.
- Canvass. (See Ballots.)
- Cement, notes and experiments on the use and testing of Portland Cement, by W. W. Maclay, 135, 141.
- Censors to award Norman Medal, report, 106, 124.
- Centennial Commission of the Society, 37, 49, 71, 102, 107, 118, 120.
- Centennial Commission of the United States, award by, 26, 37, 135.
- Changes and corrections in List of Members. (See LIST.)
- CHANUTE, O.—On committee, 123.—Resolutions offered by, 100.
- CHESBROUGH, E. S.—Chairman of committee, 99.—President of Society, 112.
- CLARKE, FREDERICK W.—Admitted as Member, 132.
- CLARKE, THOMAS C.—Discussion by, 19, 45.
- Coast Survey, memorial in relation to triangulations of, 111, 127.
- COFFIN, AMORY, letter on metric system, 2.

COLLINGWOOD.

- COLLINGWOOD, FRANCIS.—Amendments offered by, 99, 111.—Discussion by, 25.—Papers by, 7, 12, 114.
- Committees, List of, 119.
- Committee on Finance, appointed, 136.
- Changes in, 25.—Report, 1, 8, 107, 125.
- on gauging of streams, 47, 107, 120, 123.
- on Library, appointed, 136.—Changes in, 25.—Reference to, 102.—Report upon copyright, title of publications, publication of reports, 8.
- on Metric system of weights and measures, 1, 7, 26, 47, 88, 107, 108, 120, 124.
- on nomenclature and classification of masonry, 48, 111, 120, 122.
- on nominations, 52, 91, 101.
- on quarters for the Society, 19, 49, 72, 111, 120, 125.
- on resistances of railway trains, 48, 107, 120.
- on tests of American Iron and Steel, 48, 70, 108, 119, 123.
- on time and place of convention, 107, 124.
- on uniform accounts and returns of railway companies, 48, 108, 120, 123.
- Committees, Special, to draft laws in reference to inspection and tests of bridges, 45, 86, 87.
- Standing, 25, 135, 136.
- COMPTON, ALFRED G.—Admitted as Associate, 132.
- Constitution, Amendments to, in relation to annual dues, 50, 86, 109, 110, 111.
- In relation to date of membership, 121.—In relation to expulsions, 50, 51, 110.—In relation to propositions of candidates and elections for membership, 50, 51, 109, 121.—In relation to residence and non-residence of members, 50, 110.
- Convention, Ninth Annual. (See MINUTES.) 22, 35, 43, 73, 114.—Tenth Annual, time and place of, 107, 124.
- Conventions, Resolutions as to conduct of, 51, 52, 89, 121.
- COOKE, ROBERT L.—Death announced, 84, 85.—Committee to prepare Memoir, 99.
- COOPER, THEODORE.—Discussion by, 45.—Letter on Metric system, 2.
- Co-ordinate Surveying, by HENRY F. WALLING, 8.
- COPELAND, CHARLES W.—Paper by, 7, 12.
- Copyright, 8.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Correspondence, Selections from. (See NOTES.) 2, 12.—From Amory Coffin, 2.—From Francis Collingwood, 13.—From Theodore Cooper, 2.—From Charles W. Copeland, 12.—From Henry S. Drinker, 3.

CORTHELL, E. L.—On committee, 1.—Paper by, 46, 114.

CORYELL, MARTIN.—On committee, 99.

CONE, ECKLEY B.—Admitted as Member, 24.

CRIVEN, ALFRED W.—On committee, 35, 53.

CROES, J. J. R.—Amendments to By-Laws offered by, 26.—Chairman of committee, 47, 48, 99, 107, 111, 120, 122, 123.—On committee, 69, 136.—Resolutions offered by, 90, 107.—Treasurer, 112.—Trustee, 106.

CROSBY, WILSON.—Teller, 107.

Cushioning the reciprocating parts of steam engines, by JOHN W. HILL, 86.

DAVIS, CHARLES E. L. B.—Admitted as Member, 84.

DAVIS, JOSEPH P.—Director, 112.—Letter from, 107.

Death of Members. (See LIST.)

Direction, Minutes of Board of. (See MINUTES.)

Discussions. (See PAPERS.)

Drawing Board for field use, by CHARLES E. BILLIN, 86.

DRINKER, HENRY S.—On Tunneling, 3.

Dues, 101.

DUN, JAMES. Admitted as Member, 34.

DURHAM, C. WHEELER.—Admitted as Member, 34.

Efficiency of Steam Vacuum Pumps, by J. FOSTER FLAGG, 46.

ELLIS, THEODORE G.—Chairman of Centennial Commission, 49, 72, 107, 120.—Chairman of Committee, 69.—On Library Committee, 25.—Paper by, 46, 114.—Resolutions offered by, 47, 52, 107.—Trustee, 106.

EMACK, CHARLES E.—Death announced, 84, 85.—Committee to prepare Memoir, 99.

EMERY, CHARLES E.—Associate Secretary, Ninth Annual Convention, 35, 44.—Discussion by, 19, 25, 46, 48.—Paper by, 46, 86, 114.—Report by, 35.—Resolution offered by, 52.

ENDICOTT, M. T.—Admitted as Member, 34.

Engineers, duties of—under certain circumstances, resolution, 100, 101, 111.

ENSIGN.

ENSIGN E. W.—Death announced, 98.

Erie Canal. (See Water Surface.)

Exchanges received for Transactions, 117.

Failure of Ashtabula Bridge, by CHARLES MACDONALD, 19, 27, 45.—discussed, 7, 8, 19, 27, 45.

FANNING, JOHN T.—Paper by, 1.

FARQUHAR, F. U.—Amendment proposed by, 51.—Discussion by, 48.

Finance Committee. (See Committee.)

Finances, Statement of, 10.

FINK, ALBERT.—On Committee, 136.—Vice-President of Society, 112.

FLAGG, J. FOSTER.—Discussion by, 18, 19, 33, 46, 86.—Letter from, 86.—Paper by, 46.

FLINT, EDWARD A.—Donation to Society by, 136.

Flow of Water in open channels, by THEODORE G. ELLIS, 46.

FORNEY, M. N.—Chairman of Committee, 99.—On Finance Committee, 25, 126.—Trustee, 106.—On Committee, 69.

FORSHEY, C. G.—Chairman of Convention, 44.—Discussion by, 46.—On Committee, 1, 52.—Paper by, 52, 114.—Resolution offered by, 52.

FRANCIS, JAMES B.—Discussion by, 46.—On committee, 35, 53.

FUNIAK, FRED. DE.—On committee, 52, 123.

GODWIN, BRYANT.—Admitted as Member, 34.

GOLAY, PHILIP.—Admitted as Member, 98.

GRAIN, WILLIAM.—Death announced, 26, 34.

Graphic Method of representing railroad accounts, by CHARLES LATIMER, 136.

GREENE, GEORGE S.—Amendment to By-Laws proposed by, 100.—Chairman of Board of Censors, 124.—Chairman of Committee, 136.—Director, 112.—On Committee, 53, 99.—President of Society, 105.—Trustee, 106.

GRIFFEN, JOHN.—Chairman of Committee, 48.—Discussion by, 46.

GUNNELL, WILLIAM C.—Admitted as Member, 24.

Harbor, Improvement of the entrance to Galveston, by CHARLES W. HOWELL, 46.

HARDEE, THOMAS S.—Admitted as Member, 68.—Paper by, 52, 114.

HARDY, ARTHUR S.—Admitted as Associate, 34.

HARRIS, R. L.—Resolution by, 107.—Teller, 107.

HARROD.

- HARROD, BENJAMIN M.—Admitted as Member, 68.
- HASWELL, CHARLES H.—Paper by, 114.
- HAYWARD, JAMES A.—Admitted as Member, 98.
- HERSCHEL, CLEMENS.—Amendments to By-Laws offered by, 112.—Chairman of Committee, 120, 124.—Communication from, 86, 91.—Discussion by, 45, 46.—On Committee, 26.—Resolution offered by, 45, 47, 52.
- HILL, JOHN W.—Paper by, 86, 114.
- HILLMAN, CHARLES F.—Admitted as Member, 68.
- HILTON, CHARLES.—Discussion by, 19, 45.
- HOLLEY, A. L.—Trustee, 106.
- HORTON, SANFORD.—Admitted as Junior, 24.
- House, Society, 19, 27, 120.
- HOWELL, CHARLES W.—Paper by, 46, 114.
- HUTTON, WILLIAM R.—On Committee, 99.—Teller, 107.
- HYDE, WILLIAM B.—Admitted as Member, 98.
- Hydraulics, 46.
- Illustrations of Papers, rules for, 78, 83, 141.
- Inspection and tests of Bridges. (See Bridges.)
- Institute of Mining Engineers, 5, 7, 18, 26.
- Institution of Civil Engineers, 78.
- Iron and Steel, Board to test. (See Board.)
- Committee on tests of. (See Committee.)
- Qualities of,—paper by W. METCALF discussed, 49.
- JOHNSON, THOMAS H.—Admitted as Member, 132.
- KEEFER, THOMAS C.—Admitted as Member, 68.
- KIRKWOOD, JAMES P.—Death announced, 34, 35.—Committee to prepare memoir, 53.
- KNAPP, GEO. O.—Admitted as Junior, 34.
- LATIMER, CHARLES.—Paper by, 136.
- LE CONTE, LOUIS J.—Admitted as Member, 68.
- Letter Ballots. (See Ballot.)
- Levees as a system of reclaiming low lands by G. W. R. BAYLEY, 47.—Discussion by J. FOSTER FLAGG, 19, 86.
- LEVERICH, G.—Amendments to Constitution and By-Laws proposed by, 50, 51.—Chairman of Committee, 107, 124.—On Committee, 69.—Secretary, 105, 112, 122.—Resolutions offered by, 100.—Trustee, 106.

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM.

- LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, ADDITIONS TO, 17, 40, 57, 77, 82, 95, 104, 117, 131, 135, 136, 138.
- Committee. (See Committee.)
- Catalogue, 119.—Open on Thursday evenings, 135, 141.—Present state of, 118.
- List of Members.—Additions, 6, 24, 34, 68, 84, 98, 132, 142.
- Changes and corrections, 6, 24, 34, 68, 84, 98, 132, 142.
- Deaths, 1, 26, 34, 35, 68, 84, 98, 122.
- Resignations, 24, 98, 133.
- List of New Books on Engineering and Technology. (See Books.)
- LOTZ, WILLIAM H.—Paper by, 86, 114.
- MACDONALD, CHARLES.—Discussion by, 7.—Paper by, 19, 23, 114.
- MACLAY, W. W.—Award of Norman Medal to, 106.—Paper by, 135.
- MACY, ARTHUR.—Admitted as Junior, 84.
- Masonry, 48.
- Nomenclature and classification of. (See Committee.)
- MALPINE, WILLIAM J.—Amendments to By-Laws proposed by, 99.—Resolutions offered by, 100, 101.
- McCOMB, DAVID E.—Admitted as Member, 24.
- McDOWELL, NATHAN M.—Admitted as Member, 34.
- Measures, Metric System of. (See Metric.)
- Medal. (See Norman.)
- Meeting, Annual (see Minutes), 105.
- Meetings, Announcements of (see Announcements).—Arrangements for, 8.—Minutes of (see Minutes).—Number of, 114.—Reports of, 27, 36, 73.
- Members, additions to (See List).—Ballots for (See Ballots).—Changes and corrections (See List).—Death of (See List).—Resigned (See List).
- Membership, increase in, 113.—Statement of, 113.
- Memoir of deceased Members, 48.
- Memoranda. (See Notes.)
- Memorial in reference to Metric system. (See Metric.)
- in reference to Triangulations of United States Coast Survey. (See Coast.)
- MENDELL, GEORGE H. Admitted as member, 6.
- MERRILL, W. E. On committee, 122.
- METCALF, W. Paper by, 49.
- Metric System of Weights and Measures, 1, 2, 7, 26, 47, 52, 86, 88, 91, 98, 107, 108, 120, 124.
- Mining Engineers. (See Institute.)
- Minutes of Meetings of Board of Direction, 1, 8, 19, 27, 35, 53, 69, 79, 91, 101, 136.

MINUTES.

- Jan. 3d, 1877.—Proposals considered, 1.
- Feb. 7th, 1877.—Plan for accounts and appropriations adopted; arrangements for meetings made; report of Committee on Library as to copyright, title of publications and publication of reports made and acted upon; Treasurer's report accepted; appropriations made, 8.
- Feb. 9th, 1877.—Proposals considered, 8.
- March 5th, 1877.—Proposals considered, 19.
- March 7th, 1877.—Meeting not held, 19.
- April 4th, 1877.—Reports of Committees considered; change of house decided; appropriations made; financial business considered, 27.
- May 2d and 11th, 1877.—Meetings not held, 35.
- May 21st, 1877.—Action to perfect organization of Society completed, 53; Norman book premium announced, 54.
- May 23d, 1877.—Proposals considered, 54.
- June 6th, 1877.—Meeting not held, 54.
- June 20th, 1877.—Proposals considered, 69.
- July 2d, 1877.—Proposals considered; committee to arrange and furnish rooms appointed; committee to report form and statements for letter ballots appointed, 69.
- July 4th, 1877.—Meeting not held, 69.
- July 18th, 1877.—No action taken, 79.
- August 1st, 1877.—Proposals considered, 79.
- August 7th, 1877.—Forms of letter ballot considered; proposals considered; appropriations made, 79.
- September 5th, 1877.—Proposals considered, 91.
- October 2d, 1877.—Proposals considered; report of Nominating Committee received, 91.
- October 4th, 1877.—No action, 101.
- October 9th, 1877.—Reports received as to unpaid dues; as to seniority of membership, 101.
- October 11th, 1877.—Report of Nominating Committee received; issue of ballots directed, 101.
- November 1st, 1877.—Annual Report considered; regulations as to canvass of ballots made, 101.
- November 5th, 1877.—Annual Report perfected, 102.

MINUTES.

- November 7th, 1877.—Statement of Centennial Commission received in reference to memoirs, and action taken, 102.
 - November 14th, 1877.—Standing Committees appointed; proposals considered, 136.
 - December 5th, 1877.—Proposals considered, 136.
- Minutes of Meetings of the Society, 1, 7, 19, 25, 35, 43, 49, 53, 69, 79, 85, 99, 105, 135.
- Jan. 3d, 1877.—Canvass of ballots postponed; "Water Conduit under pressure" by JOHN T. FANNING, read; report of Committee on Finance on report of Treasurer presented; death of GEORGE W. R. BAYLEY announced and action taken, 1.
 - Jan. 17th, 1877.—Communications on "Mt. Washington Railway, its construction and operation" by FRANCIS COLLINGWOOD and CHARLES W. COPELAND read; Institute of Mining Engineers invited to meet at Society rooms; "Facts and opinions in regard to Failure of Bridge at Ashtabula" considered and discussed, 7.
 - Feb. 7th, 1877.—Ballots canvassed for members and upon appointment of Committee to report form of Memorial in reference to Metric system, 7; "Co-ordinate Surveying," by HENRY F. WALLING, read; meetings of Institute of Mining Engineers announced; "Facts and opinions in regard to Failure of Bridge at Ashtabula" discussed by WILLIAM P. SHINN, GEO. S. MORISON, and others, and communications read from G. K. WARREN, E. N. BEEBOUT, and E. S. PHILBRICK, 8.
 - Feb. 21st, 1877.—"Failure of Bridge at Ashtabula," by CHARLES MACDONALD, read and discussed by THOMAS C. CLARKE, CHARLES HILTON, CHAS. E. EMERY, and others, 19.
 - March 7th, 1877.—Discussion by J. FOSTER FLAGG on "Levees as a system of reclaiming low lands" read; securing house for Society considered; report of operations of Board to test Iron and Steel made by R. H. THURSTON, 19.
 - March 21st, 1877.—Meeting not held, 25.

MINUTES.

- April 4th, 1877.—Ballots for members canvassed; "The simultaneous ignition of thousands of mines and the most advantageous grouping of fuses," by JULIUS H. STRIEDINGER, read and discussed by FRANCIS COLLINGWOOD, CHARLES E. EMERY, EDWARD P. NORTH, RICHARD P. ROTHWELL, and others; donations of photographs acknowledged; changes in Standing Committees announced, 25.—Members of Committee to report form of memorial in reference to Metric system announced; Certificate of award from United States Centennial Commission presented; letter of thanks from Institute of Mining Engineers read; death of WILLIAM GRAIN announced and action taken; amendments to By-Laws proposed, 26.
- April 18th, 1877.—Letter by GEN. PHILIP SCHUYLER in regard to water supply for New York City read; "Failure of the Ashtabula Bridge" discussed, and communications from SQUIRE WHIPPLE and ALFRED P. BOLLER read, 27.
- May 2d, 1877.—Meeting not held, 35.
- May 11th, 1877.—"Brush Dams" by EDWARD P. NORTH read and discussed; informal report of Convention made; death of JAMES P. KIRKWOOD announced and action taken, 35.
- May 16th, 1877.—Meeting not held, 53.
- June 6th, 1877.—Report of Board of Direction of action to perfect organization of Society made and approved; Committee appointed to prepare memoir of the late JAMES P. KIRKWOOD; resolution in relation to the Paris Exposition referred, 53.
- June 20th and July 4th, 1877.—Meetings not held, 69.
- July 12th, 1877.—Ballots for members canvassed, 79.
- September 5th, 1877.—Ballots for members canvassed; deaths of LOUIS NICKERSON, CHARLES S. EMACK, WILLIAM B. OGDEN, ROBERT L. COOKE, and HENRY TYSON, announced, and action taken; letters from foreign societies read, 85.—Description of a field drawing-board, by CHARLES E. BILLIN, read; letter from ROBERT BRIGGS in reference to "Report on means of averting bridge accidents," read; description of peculiar roof truss,

MINUTES.

- by J. FOSTER FLAGG, read; amendment to constitution recommended; "Design for a steam Vacuum Pump," by WILLIAM H. LOTZ; "Cushioning the reciprocating parts of steam engines," by JOHN W. HILL; and "Levees, a discussion," by J. FOSTER FLAGG, presented, 86.
- September 19th, 1877.—Amendment to Constitution submitted; communication in reference to ballot upon resolutions as to metric standards, from CLEMENS HERSCHEL read; "Relative quantities of material in bridges of different kinds of various heights, Part 2," by CHARLES E. EMERY, read, 86.
- October 3d, 1877.—Ballots canvassed upon resolutions in reference to bridge inspections, 86, 87.—Upon adoption of memorials in reference to Metric system, 88.—Upon appointment of committee to consider and report best system of weights and measures, 88.—Upon conduct of conventions, 89.—Resolutions as to duties of Secretary offered, 90.
- October 18th, 1877.—Committees announced to prepare memoirs of deceased members; committee on annual dinner appointed; amendments to By-Laws proposed, 99.—Resolutions in reference to office of Secretary and in reference to duties of engineers under certain circumstances proposed, 100, 101.
- November 21, 1877.—"Notes and experiments on the use and testing of Portland Cement," by W. W. MACLAY, read and discussed, 135.
- December 5th, 1877.—Centennial bronze medal and diploma presented; original drawings of Reading Railroad presented by MONCURE ROBINSON; discussion by W. MILNOR ROBERTS; "Peculiar case of failure in a Water Main," by D. McN. STAUFFER, read and discussed; opening of library on Thursday evenings determined; Standing Committees announced, 135.
- December 19th, 1877.—Large donations to the library from T. S. SEDGWICK and EDWARD A. FLINT, announced; "A graphic method of representing railroad accounts," by CHARLES LATIMER, read and discussed; "Peculiar case of failure in a Water Main" discussed, 136.

VII

MINUTES.

Minutes of Ninth Annual Convention, New Orleans, April 24th, 30th, 1877, 43.—Excursions; attendance, members and guests, 43.—First Session, called to order by JOHN BOGART; opening address by W. MILNOR ROBERTS; Chairman of Convention, C. G. FORSHEY; Secretary, JOHN BOGART; Associate Secretary, CHARLES E. EMERY, 44.—Council of City of New Orleans extends hospitalities to Convention; Barataria Ship Canal Company invites members to inspect route; subject, "Bridges," considered; discussions on "The failure of the Ashtabula bridge," by ROBERT BRIGGS, THOMAS C. CLARKE, THEODORE COOPER, CHARLES HILTON, C. SHALER SMITH, read; report of Committee of Ohio Legislature presented; subject discussed by WILLIAM H. SEARLES, WILLIAM ROTCH, CLEMENS HERSCHEL, EDWARD S. PHILBRICK and others; resolutions for appointment of special committees to draft laws in reference to inspection and tests of bridges, offered by C. SHALER SMITH and by CLEMENS HERSCHEL, 45.—Paper by CHARLES E. EMERY; "Relative quantities of material in bridges of different kinds and various heights" read; discussion by W. SOOY SMITH, EDWARD S. PHILBRICK, JOHN GRIFFEN, CLEMENS HERSCHEL, J. FOSTER FLAGG and G. BOUSCAREN; subject, "Hydraulics," considered; paper by CHARLES W. HOWELL, "The improvement of the entrance to Galveston Harbor," read and discussed; paper by THEODORE G. ELLIS, "The flow of water in open channels," read; discussed by JAMES B. FRANCIS; statement as to works at mouth of the Mississippi, made by E. L. CORTHELL; paper by C. G. FORSHEY, "Cut-offs of the Mississippi River, their effect on the channel above and below," discussed by the author and others; paper by WILLIAM H. SEARLES, "Description of survey for determining the slope of water surface in the Erie Canal," read; statement as to "Method of determining the slope of the Mississippi River," made by E. L. CORTHELL; paper by J. FOSTER FLAGG, "Efficiency of Steam

MINUTES.

Vacuum Pumps," discussed by the author and by CHARLES E. EMERY and WILLIAM E. WORTHEN, 46.—Committee on "Gauging of streams, J. J. R. CROES, Chairman, continued. Second Session—Discussion on "Levees," by G. W. R. BAYLEY, read; report of Committee on Metric system presented, with proposed memorial; resolution for adoption of memorial submitted; resolution for appointment of committee to consider and report best system of weights and measures submitted, 47. Paper by W. MILNOR ROBERTS, "The American Society of Civil Engineers and its Future," read; memoir of the late GEORGE W. R. BAYLEY, read. Third Session—Subject, "Masonry," considered; committee on "Nomenclature and classification of Masonry, J. J. R. CROES, Chairman, continued; subject, "Railroads," considered; committees on "Uniform Accounts and Returns of Railroad Companies," and on "Resistances of Railway Trains," WILLIAM P. SHINN, Chairman, continued; subject, "Strength of Materials," considered; report of committee on "Tests of American Iron and Steel," W. SOOY SMITH, Chairman, presented and discussed by him, C. E. EMERY and F. U. FARQUHAR; committee to suggest action as to tests of American iron and steel appointed; report of committee made and adopted, 48.—"Qualities of Iron and Steel," by W. METCALF, discussed; "Set in metals, subjected to strain for considerable periods of time," by ROBERT H. THURSTON, discussed. Fourth Session—Held as regular meeting, President and Secretary *pro tem* appointed; report of Centennial Commission of the society, THEODORE G. ELLIS, Chairman, presented; Commission continued; report of Committee on Quarters for the Society, JOHN BOGART, Chairman, presented; committee continued; amendments to By-Laws adopted; amendments to Constitution presented and considered, 49, 50.—Amendments to By-Laws proposed; resolutions in reference to conduct of conventions proposed, 51, 52.—Resolutions as to Metric system adopted. Fifth Ses-

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method of
nts," by
and dis-
failure in
136.

MINUTES.

sion—Appointment of Nominating Committee; paper on "Patents and Patent Laws, Inventions, Inventors and Authors," by C. G. FORSHEY, read; paper, "A Novel Railroad Survey," by THOMAS S. HARDEE, read; discussion by WILLIAM H. SEARLES; description of Kentucky River Bridge, given by G. BOUSCAREN, 52.—Acknowledgment of courtesies, 53.

Minutes of the Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting, November 7th, 1877, 105.—Attendance; Report of Board of Direction, presented by G. LEVERICH, Secretary, and accepted; Resignation of Trustees presented and accepted, 105.—Report of Board of Censors made awarding the Norman Medal to W. W. MACLAY, and the Norman Book Prize to J. H. STRIEDINGER; Treasurer's Annual Report presented and referred; J. BOGART, Treasurer, reports as to stock belonging to Society, 106.—Tellers appointed; Report of Committee on Finance presented by W. MILNOR ROBERTS, Chairman, and accepted; Report presented by Secretary on time and place of next Convention; letters on the subject read; Boston selected as place; time referred to Board of Direction.—T. G. ELLIS, Chairman, Centennial Commission, made report; Commission continued; Report of Committee on Gauging Streams, J. J. R. CROES, Chairman, presented, accepted and committee continued.—Report of Committee on Metric System of Weights and Measures, CLEMENS HERSCHEL, Chairman, presented; motion to submit to letter ballot the question of indefinite postponement of the consideration of the Metric System carried; W. P. SHINN, Chairman of Committee on Resistances of Railway Trains, made report, and committee continued, 107.—Report of Committee on Uniform Accounts and Returns of Railway Companies, W. P. SHINN, Chairman, presented, accepted and committee continued; Report of Committee on Tests of American Iron and Steel, W. SOOY SMITH, Chairman, presented; statement of progress of work done made by R. H. THURSTON, 108.—Amendments to Constitution considered and recommendations in reference

MINUTES.

thereto adopted, 109.—Amendments to By-Laws referred to Board of Direction, 110.—Amendments to By-Laws adopted; resolutions referred to Board of Direction; resolutions in reference to duties of Engineers passed; ballots for members canvassed; Report of Committee on Nomenclature and Classification of Masonry, J. J. R. CROES, Chairman, presented; Report of Committee on Quarters for the Society, JOHN BOGART, Chairman, presented, and committee continued; memorial in reference to triangulations of Coast Survey ordered to be submitted to letter ballot; amendments to Constitution offered, 111. Amendment to By-Laws offered; officers elected; thanks of Society voted to retiring Secretary, 112. Mississippi river, cut-offs, 46. — Improvements at Mouth, by E. L. CORTHELL, 46. MORISON, GEORGE S.—Discussion by, 8. MORSE, BENJAMIN F.—Admitted as member, 84. MORSE, JAMES O.—Trustee, 106. Mount Washington Railway, description by FRANCIS COLLINGWOOD and CHARLES W. COPELAND, 7, 12. Museum. (See Library.) New Books. (See Books.) New Orleans, Convention at, 43.—Council of City extends hospitalities, 45. New York City Water Supply, 27, 36. NICKERSON, LOUIS.—Death announced, 68, 85.—Committee to prepare memoir, 99. Ninth Annual Convention. (See Convention.) Nomenclature and Classification of Masonry. (See Committee.) Nominations. (See Committee.) Norman Book Premium, 54, 106, 119. Norman Medal, award of, 106, 119, 124. —papers for, 23, 33, 42, 67, 78, 83. NORTH, EDWARD P.—Chairman of Committee, 99.—Discussion by, 25.—Papers by, 35, 114. Notes and Memoranda, 2, 12, 27, 36, 73, 91. — Address of W. MILNOR ROBERTS, at opening of Ninth Annual Convention, 73. — American Tunneling, 3. — Centennial Commission of the Society, report on awards, 37. — Metric System of Weights and Measures, 2, 91.

NOVEL RAILROAD SURVEY.

- Mount Washington Railway, 12.
- Reports of Meetings, 27, 36, 73.
- Selections from Correspondence. (See Correspondence), 2, 12.
- Tests of American Iron and Steel, 27.
- Water Supply from Bronx river, letter by Gen. PHILIP SCHUYLER, 36.
- Novel Railroad Survey, by THOMAS S. HARDEE, 52.
- OGDEN, WILLIAM B.—Death announced, 84, 85.—Committee to prepare memoir, 99.
- Officers elected, 112.
- Organization of Society, 53, 121.
- PAINE, WILLIAM H.—Director, 112.—On Committee, 126, 136.—Trustee, 106.
- Papers discussed, 7, 8, 19, 25, 27, 35, 45, 46, 47, 48, 115.—For distribution, 78.—For the Norman Medal, 23, 33, 42, 67, 78, 83.—On engineering subjects, 23, 33, 67, 83, 97, 141.—Presented, 66, 83, 86, 97, 114.—Published, 115.—Read, 1, 7, 8, 19, 25, 27, 35, 45, 46, 48.—Received, 6, 18, 23, 33, 83.
- Paris Exposition, 53, 107.
- PARKHURST, H. W.—admitted as Member, 98.
- Patents and Patent Laws, Inventions, Inventors and Authors, by C. G. FORSHEY, 52.
- Peculiar case of failure in a water main, by D. McN. STAUFFER, 135, 136.
- PHILBRICK, E. S.—Communication from, 8.—Discussion by, 45, 46.—On committee, 48.—Paper by, 18.
- Postage Rates, 5, 24, 33, 67.
- Proposals considered, 1, 8, 19, 54, 69, 79, 91, 136.
- Prussia, Minister of Public Works of, 85.
- Publication of Papers, 116.
- of Reports, 8.
- Publications, Title of, 8.
- Pumps. (See Efficiency.) (See Vacuum.)
- Quarters for Society (See House), 19, 27, 49, 72, 111, 120, 125.
- Railroads, 48.
- Railway, Bridge failure, 7, 8, 19, 27, 45, —Mount Washington (see Mount).
- RAYMOND, CHARLES W.—Admitted as Junior, 132.
- Reading Railroad, original drawings of, presented by MONCURE ROBINSON, 135.
- Report, of Censors to award Norman Medal, 106, 124.—Of Treasurer (see Treasurer).—On means of averting

REPORTS.

- bridge accidents, letter in reference to, by ROBERT BRIGGS, 86.
- , Annual of Board of Direction, November 7th, 1877, 113.—Members, number and increase, 113.—Meetings held, of the Society,—of the Board, Ninth Annual Convention, —Papers presented, —Reports made, 114.—Discussions.—Papers published and not published, 115.—Reference to question as to publication of certain papers,—Contents of Proceedings,—Close, Index and Title Page of Volumes,—Appendices to Transactions, 116.—Increase of Library,—Magazines,—Papers,—Exchanges,—Subscriptions, 117.—Publications received.—Present State of Library.—Increase through Centennial Commission, 118.—Catalogue, Contributions,—Purchases,—Norman Medal and Norman Book Prize,—Committees, 119.—Rooms of the Society,—Lease of House,—Metric system of weights and measures, 120.—Resolutions,—Amendments to Constitution,—Perfecting Organization of Society,—Report of Treasurer, 121.—Death of Members, 122.
- Reports, List of, made to Society, 114.
- , of committees (see Committees).—of meetings. (See Meetings).—Publication of, 8.
- Resigned, Members. (See List.)
- Resistances of Railway Trains. (See Committee.)
- ROBERTS, W. MILNOR, Chairman of Committee, 107, 126, 136.—Discussion by, 135.—Opening address at Ninth Annual Convention, 44, 73.—Paper by, 48, 114.—President *pro tem.*, 49.—Trustee, 106.—Vice-President of Society, 112.—On Committee, 1.
- ROBINSON, MONCURE.—Donation to the Society, 135.
- Rooms of the Society, 19, 27, 33, 42, 67, 69, 78, 83, 141.
- ROTCH, WILLIAM.—Discussion by, 45.
- ROTHWELL, RICHARD P.—Discussion by, 25.
- SCHOTT, C. R.—On Committee, 99.—Teller, 107.
- SCHUYLER, GEN. PHILIP.—Letter in regard to water supply for New York City, 27, 36.
- SEARLES, WILLIAM H.—Discussion by, 45, 52.—Paper by, 46, 114.
- Secretary.—Duties of, 90, 100, 111.
- SEDGWICK, T. S.—Donation to the Society, 136.

SELECTIONS.

- Selections from Correspondence. (See Correspondence.)
 Seniority of Members, 101.
 Set in metals subjected to strain for considerable periods of time, by R. H. Thurston.—Discussed, 49.
 SHINN, WILLIAM P., Chairman of Committee, 48, 107, 108, 120, 123.—Discussion by, 8.—Resolutions offered by, 106, 107.
 Simultaneous ignition of thousands of mines and the most advantageous grouping of fuses, by JULIUS H. STRIEDINGER, 25.
 SMITH, C. SHALER, director, 112.—Discussion by, 45.—Resolutions offered by, 45, 52.
 SMITH, C. VANDERVOORT, director, 112.—On committee, 136.
 SMITH, W. SOOV, Chairman of Committee, 48, 70, 108, 119, 123.—Discussion by, 46.—On Committee, 52.
 Society House. (See House.)
 — Minutes. (See Minutes.)
 — Rooms. (See Rooms.)
 SPIELMAN, ARTHUR.—Transferred from associate to member, 98.
 Statement of finances. (See Finances.)
 STAUFFER, D. MCN.—Paper by, 135, 136
 Steel, Board to test iron and—. (See Board.)
 —, Committee on tests of iron and—. (See Committee.)
 —, qualities of iron and—. (See Iron.)
 STEPHENS, CLINTON F.—Admitted as Member, 142.
 Stock owned by Society, 106.
 Strength of Materials, 48.
 STRIEDINGER, JULIUS H.—Award of Norman Book Prize to, 106.—Paper by, 25, 33, 114.
 STRONG, CHARLES H. — Amendment proposed by, 51.
 Swedish Society of Engineers, 85.
 Tellers to canvass ballots, 107.
 Tests, Board to test Iron and Steel. (See Board.)

THURSTON.

- Committee on tests of Iron and Steel. (See Committee.)
 — of Bridges. (See Bridges.)
 THURSTON, ROBERT H.—Paper by, 49, 114.—Report as Secretary of Board to test Iron and Steel, 19, 27, 108.
 Title of Publications, 8.
 Trains, Resistances of. (See Committee.)
 Treasurer's Report, 8, 106, 121, 126.
 Trustees of Society, 105.
 Tunnelling, 3.
 TYSON, HENRY.—Death announced, 85, 98.—Committee to prepare memoir, 99.
 Vacuum.—Design for a steam vacuum pump, by WILLIAM H. LOTZ, 86.
 VAN WINKLE, E. B.—On Committee, 122.
 WALLING, HENRY F.—Memorial offered by, 111, 127.—Paper by, 8, 114.—Resolution offered by, 111.
 WARREN, G. K.—Communication from, 8.—Paper by, 18.
 Water Conduit under pressure, by JOHN T. FANNING, 1.
 Water Main, Failure in—. (See Peculiar.)
 Water Surface.—Description of Survey for determining the Slope of water surface in the Erie Canal, by WILLIAM H. SEARLES, 46.
 — Method of determining the Slope of the Mississippi, by E. L. CORTHELL, 46.
 Water Supply of New York City, 27, 36.
 Weights and Measures, Metric system of. (See Metric.)
 — System of, 47, 52, 88, 121.
 WHIPPLE, SQUIRE.—Communication from, 27.—Discussion by, 33.
 WILSON, JOSEPH M.—On Committee, 52.
 WORTHEN, WILLIAM E., Chairman of Committee, 52, 69. — Discussion by, 46.—On Committee, 35, 53.
 WROTNOWSKI, ARTHUR F.—Admitted as Member, 132.



American Society of Civil Engineers.

PROCEEDINGS.

Vol. III. January, 1877.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS.

(Abstract of such as may be of general interest to members.)

OF THE SOCIETY.

JANUARY 3D, 1877.—A regular meeting was held at 8 o'clock p. m.

Canvass fixed for this day, of the vote upon admission to membership was called for; reference was made to Art. XX, of the Constitution, whereby it is affirmed that "the results shall be announced at the next regular meeting held after thirty days have elapsed from the time of mailing the notification," and the canvass was deferred until the next regular meeting.*

A paper, by John T. Fanning, C. E., of Manchester, N. H., on "A Water Conduit under Pressure" was read.

The Chairman of the Committee on Finance presented the report of the Committee on the Report of the Treasurer for year ending October 31st, 1876, which was accepted and ordered to be published with accounts of receipts and expenditures of the Society during that period.

The death on December 14th, of George W. R. Bayley, C. E., late of New Orleans and Member of the Society from July 24th, 1872, was announced, and W. Milnor Roberts, Elmer L. Corthell and Caleb G. Forshey were appointed a committee to present a fit memoir of the life and professional services of the deceased.

OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTION.

JANUARY 3D, 1877.—A stated meeting was held at 3 o'clock p. m.; proposals for admission to the Society were considered and other business done.

* A second ballot for applicants to membership and on the appointment of a committee 'to report to the Society a form of memorial to Congress' in furtherance of "adoption of the Metric Standards," (Vol. II. page 173,) was subsequently sent, to non-voting Members.

NOTES AND MEMORANDA.

SELECTIONS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

THE METRIC SYSTEM OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.—The following selections from letters received since the resolution submitted for letter ballot, December 6th, "to further, by all legitimate means, the adoption of the Metric Standards in the office of Weights and Measures at Washington," and to "appoint a committee to report to the Society a form of memorial to Congress in furtherance" of this object, was issued.*

MR. AMORY COFFIN writes: In recording my vote against the resolution looking to the appointment of a committee from the Society for the furtherance of the adoption of the metric system, I would ask permission to state reasons why I take such a stand.

In the first place, I think that such legislation would be an arbitrary measure that is foreign to the nature of the American system of government, for "Liberty in things innocent is the birthright of the citizen." Congress has already authorized and legalized its use, and any one choosing to do so, is at perfect liberty to employ the metric system. Further legislation than this would be, in my opinion, undesirable and mischievous.

In the second place, I believe the system itself to be adapted rather to the uses of the scholar and closet theorist than to the practical uses of the shop and the market. The decimal system has been forced upon our currency, but the quotations of Wall street are made in eighths and quarters, and *not* in tenths. The ordinary human mind refuses to think decimally and requires a base that is capable of binary and ternary division.

My third reason is, that the metre is an extremely inconvenient unit in practice. On paper, for purposes of calculation, it is very convenient, but in the field and in the shop it is not adapted to the many and varied wants of practice. It is too inelastic, too rigid, a system. Sometimes eighths, sometimes twelfths or sixteenths are wanted, and to be forced to use the one measure of tenths in all cases would work great practical inconvenience and mischief.

For these reasons, I sincerely trust that the Society will not commit itself to the adoption of the system.

* Vol. II., page 173.

MR. THEODORE COOPER writes: I most decidedly object to any further legislation upon the subject. It is now permissible, and those who desire can employ it. To make it compulsory would be impossible (it has been in France to a certain extent), unjust, and criminal, in so far as it would be a wanton waste of accumulated capital far exceeding in value the amount of our public debt. It looks very pretty on paper. Only decimal fractions hereafter; away with vulgar fractions (a strong emphasis on the vulgar)! Now, for what purpose this change—because it is more natural or more scientific? It certainly is not the former, for the average mind cannot conceive tenths. There is no example, I believe, on record of any people adopting any such division voluntarily. Halves, thirds, and their combinations are the natural divisions in all the walks of life. The broker counts in eighths, not in mills; the ladies divide the yard into eighths; the mechanic naturally falls into halves, quarters, eighths, &c., down to sixty-fourths, for having conceived one of these steps, he can advance by subdividing his conception by two.

It is no more scientific, for the standards are similarly "pieces of metal"—one located in Paris, the other in Washington. One is supposed to be a fraction of a certain arc of a meridian, and the other a fraction of the seconds pendulum at a certain locality—neither, probably, what they ought to be; but the real standards, as determined by law, are the pieces of metal aforesaid.

Our foot can be used for all the purposes which the metre can, for we can count it in tens, hundreds, and thousands, or in tenths, hundredths, &c.,—similarly for square and cubic feet. As for the beautiful nomenclature which may be part of the attraction, why not request a committee of Greek professors to get up one, for the use of those who may desire it?

The only other argument I can see in favor of the metre is, that some other nations are adopting it. Now, do the gentlemen who advocate this measure consider that of the millions of people in the United States, but a small percentage are interested or affected by the kind of standard used in other countries? Yet they desire the government to compel

every man, woman, and child in the United States not only to lay aside their measures of length, width, and contents—thus wiping out of existence millions of dollars' worth of property—but also that capital which cannot be estimated, the accumulated experience of years based upon our present standards. It would be a more onerous tax than has ever before been inflicted upon a people, and a more unreasonable one.

Let those who wish, use the metric system, but do not let the Society make itself ridiculous by advocating any such compulsion. If it has advantages, let the law of national selection test its merits.

AMERICAN TUNNELING. — In Proceedings for March* it was announced that Mr. Henry S. Drinker, Mining Engineer, was engaged in preparing a general treatise on this subject, and engineers throughout the country were asked to assist in collecting data and facts relating to tunnel construction.

Referring to the work in hand, Mr. Drinker writes (December 22d last):

To answer fully inquiries concerning the progress of my Treatise on Tunneling, I must refer to the date of the first announcement of the work, which it will be perhaps remembered was during last spring; this announcement was made in order that, in addition to the material previously quietly collected and compiled, I might also have the advantage of general returns on the subject from engineers through the country at large, who might be interested in getting out a full report on American tunneling.

Owing to the immediate support and endorsement the work received through the kindly notices of the "Railroad Gazette," "Engineering and Mining Journal," "Railway World," and other technical periodicals, the project became pretty widely known to engineers through the country, and I was encouraged by the immediate receipt of many

very valuable returns; others have been coming in continually during the past summer and autumn, literally from all parts of the world, as only a few days since I received, through the kindness of one of the Members of your Society, a complete and most interesting report on the tunnels of New Zealand, especially prepared for my work by a friend of his in charge out there. Returns are also expected from India and Australia; others from Chili, Peru, and Brazil are at hand; the two latter as yet in an incomplete condition.

The returns from the United States, as I said above, have been very full, but my friends of the profession who have been so kind in giving their aid and assistance in the collection of data, must now bear with me in patience, long enough to allow of this large mass of material being properly and systematically arranged and presented. There are a thousand difficulties in getting out a work like this that a man never thinks of until he has to meet them; one of my most serious obstacles has been the fact that, owing to the large number of illustrations of timber and mason work, lithographic plates, etc., necessary—and the expense of publication, was therefore found to be very heavy.

The translations that will be combined with the work have been carefully selected from Rziha's "Lehrbuch der Gesammten Tunnelbaukunst," Shoen's "Tunnelbau," Lorenz' "Tunnelbau," Pressel and Kaufmann's "Bau des Hauenstein tunnels," the records of the Corps des Ponts et Chaussées, and other German and French works. They are now nearly finished, and were already partially done last spring, at the time when I hoped to bring out a first volume in advance of the balance of the work, but was stopped by the increased expense such a course would have necessitated. I am now writing, tabulating, and finishing as fast as possible, and hope to be able, before long, to say that the end has been reached.

* Vol. II., page 45.

LIST OF NEW BOOKS ON ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY.

Under this head will be announced new books on these and kindred subjects, which may be professionally useful to members of the Society.

Art, a Plea for — in the House, with special reference to the Economy of cultivating Works of Art and the Importance of Taste in Education and Morals. W. J. Loftie, London. 12mo. Macmillan, (New York.) 2s. 6d.

Astronomical Lectures. No. 5. Measurement of the Sun's Distance. John Harris. London. 8vo. Trubner. 2s.

Beetle. Potato Pests, being an illustrated Account of the Colorado Potato Beetle, and the other Insect Foes of the Potato in North

- America; with Suggestions for their Repression and Methods for their Destruction. Charles V. Riley. New York. 12mo, illus. Judd. \$0.75.
- Birds, the Land and Game — of New England; with Descriptions of the Birds, their Nests and Eggs, their Habits and Notes. H. D. Minot. Salem. 8vo, illus. (Boston, Estes & Lauriat.) \$3.00.
- Boiler Explosions, Return of Committee. (Parliamentary Report.) London. 8vo. 6d.
- Botany. New Illustrated Plant Record. Alphonso Wood. New York. 8vo. Barnes. \$1.00.
- Chemistry. The Science Examiner. Inorganic Chemistry. J. Mouckman. Leeds. 12mo. (Simpkin, London.) 4d.
- An elementary Treatise on practical and qualitative inorganic Analysis. Frank Clowes. London. 12mo. (Lindsay & Blackiston, Philadelphia. Announcement.)
- Coal, spontaneous Combustion of —. (Parliamentary) Report and Evidence. London. 8vo. 3s.
- Drawing from Nature; a Series of progressive Instructions in Sketching; to which are appended Lectures on Art; delivered at Rugby School. George Barnard. New ed. London. 8vo, illus. Routledge. 21s.
- Education. Report of the Commissioner of — for 1875. Washington. 8vo. Gov. Printing Office.
- Encyclopæia Britannica, a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and general Literature. Ninth ed. Vol. V. Edinburgh. 4to, illus. (Little, Brown & Co., Boston.) \$9.00.
- of Universal Information (the Globe). Ed. by John M. Ross. Vol. 2. Edinburgh. 4to, illus. Jack. (London. Simpkin.) 12s. 6d.
- Fire Surveys, a Summary of the Principles to be observed in Estimating the Risk of Buildings. E. M. Shaw. 2d ed. London. 12mo. Wilson. 5s.
- Friction, a Treatise on the Theory of —. John H. Jellett. Dublin. 8vo. (Simpkin, London.) 8s. 6d.
- Fungi, a plain and easy Account of British — with special Reference to the esculent and economic Species. M. C. Cooke. 3d ed. rev. London. 12mo, illus. Hardwicke. 6s.
- Mushrooms and Toadstools: how to distinguish easily the Differences between edible and poisonous Fungi. G. Worthington Smith. 3rd ed. London. 12mo, illus. Hardwicke. 1s.
- Geometry, inventional —: a Series of Problems, intended to familiarize the Pupil with geometrical Conceptions, and to exercise his inventive Faculty. William George Spencer, with a prefatory Note by Herbert Spencer. London. 18mo. (Appleton, New York.) \$0.50.
- Simson's Euclid, ed. in the symbolical Form, by R. Blacklock. New ed. London. 18mo. Simpkin. 6s.
- Geological Observations on the volcanic Islands and Parts of South America visited during the Voyage of H. M. S. "Beagle." Charles Darwin. 2nd ed. London. 8vo, illus. Murray. 12s. 6d.
- Geology. The great Ice Age and its Relation to the Antiquity of man. James Geikie. 2nd ed. rev. London. 8vo, illus. Daldy & Ibbister. 24s.
- What the Earth is Composed of? 3 Lectures by Prof. Roscoe. London. 12mo, illus. Macmillan (New York). \$0.25.
- Gold; or, legal Regulations for the Standard of Gold and Silver Wares in different Countries of the World. Trans. and abr. from "Die gesetzliche Regelung des Feingehaltes von Gold und Silber Waaren, von Arthur von Studnitz," by Mrs. Brewer; with Notes and Additions by Edwin W. Streeter. London. 8vo. Chatto & Windus. 3s. 6d.
- and Debt, an American Handbook of Finance, with over 80 Tables and Diagrams illustrative of the following Subjects: the Dollar and other Units; Paper Money in the United States and Europe; Gold and Silver in the United States and Europe; Suspensions of Specie Payments; the Era of Gold; Values of the Precious Metals; the Era of Debt; the Rise and Fall of Prices; also a Digest of the monetary Laws of the United States. W. L. Fawcett. Philadelphia. 12mo. Griggs. \$1.75.
- Health, Relation between topographical Surveys and the Study of the public Health. James T. Gardner. Albany. 8vo.
- Insurance, Notes on Life —. Part I, theoretical, Part II, practical; with Appendix and algebraic Discussion. Gustavus W. Smith. 3d ed., rev., enl. and re-arranged. New York. 8vo. Van Nostrand. \$2.00.
- Iron and Metal Trades Companion; being a Calculator containing a Series of Tables upon a new and comprehensive Plan for expeditiously ascertaining the Value of any Goods bought or sold by Weight, from 1s. per Cwt. to 112s. per Cwt., and from 1/4d. per Pound to 1s. per Pound; each Table extends from 1 Pound to 100 Tons; to which is appended Rules for Decimals, Square and Cube Roots, Mensuration of Superficies and Solids, &c.; also Tables of Weights of Materials, and other useful Memoranda. Thomas Downie. London. 16mo. Lockwood. 9s.
- a Treatise on the Application of —, to the Construction of Bridges, Girders, and other Works. Francis Camplin. 2nd ed., rev. and cor. London. 12mo. (Weale's Series.) Lockwood. 2s. 6d.
- Light, the Japan — with which the Japanese Government has provided the leading Ports. R. H. Brenton, with Abstract of Discussion. (Minutes of Proceedings, Institution of Civil Engineers.) London. 8vo, illus. Inst. Civil Eng.
- Mechanic's, the operative — Workshop Companion. William Templeton. 12th ed., rev. and enl. London. 18mo. Lockwood. 5s.
- Metal Trade; Calculator for —. Gavin Wilson. London. Knight. 10s. 6d.
- Natural History and Antiquities of Solborne. Gilbert White; rev. by James Edmund Harting. 2nd ed., with 10 Letters not included in any previous Ed. London. 8vo. Bickers. 10s. 6d.
- Mining, Transactions of the North of England Institute of mining and mechanical Engineers, September and October. Newcastle-on-Tyne. 8vo.
- Orthographic Projection, elementary Treatise on —. William Binns. 8th ed., illus. Vol. I. London. 8vo. Spots. (New York.) 9s.
- Parks, Third annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Public Parks, New York, from May 1st, 1872, to December 31st, 1873. New York. 8vo.
- Plains of the Great West and their Inhabitants, being a Description of the Plains, Game, Indians, etc., of the Great North American Desert. Richard Irving Dodge; with an Introduction by William Black

more. New York. 8vo, illus. *Putnam's*. \$4.00.

Problems, Solutions of the Cambridge Senate House Problems and Riders for 1875. A. G. Greenhill. London. 8vo. *Macmillan* (New York). 8s. 6d.

Projection, the Art of —, a Manual of Experimentation in Physics, Chemistry, and Natural History, with Porte Lumière and Magic Lantern. A. E. Dolbear. Boston. 12mo, illus. *Lee & Shepard*. \$1.50.

Rail joints (on). Extracted from the "Engineer" November 10th and 17th, 1876. C. P. Sandberg. London, folio, illus. *Engineer*. Railways. (Parliamentary Reports.) London. 8vo. Inspectors' Reports on Accidents. Part 5. 2s. 6d. Returns of Accidents, April to June, 1876. 1s. 2d.

—, On the permanent Way of —. R. P. Williams, with Abstract of Discussion. (Minutes of Proceedings, Institution of Civil Engineers). London. 8vo, illus. *Inst. Civil Eng.*

Rivers Pollution Prevention Act, 1876, 39 and 40 Vic., c. 75; with Introduction, Notes and Index. Alexander Glen. London. 12mo. *Knight*. 2s. 6d.

Sanitary Measures, East India—1874-75. Papers. (Parliamentary Reports). London. 8vo. 2s. 2d.

Science. Roger Bacon; the Philosophy of Science in the Middle Ages: an Address, introductory to the Session 1876-7, in the Department of Art, Science and Law, at Queen's College, Manchester. pp. 36. Robert Adamson. Manchester. 12mo. (*Simpkin, London*). 1s.

Ships, the Fleets of the World; the Galley Period. Foxhall A. Parker. New York. 8vo, illus. *Van Nostrand*. \$5.00

Sorrento and inlaid Work, a Manual of —,

for Amateurs, with original Designs. Chicago. 8vo, illus. (*Am. News Co., New York*). \$1.50.

Steam Engines, the relative Merits of simple and compound Engines as applied to Ships of War, with an Appendix containing Particulars and Analyses of recent Experiments. Neil McDougall. London. 8vo. *Spons* (New York). \$1.75.

Survey. Report of the trigonometrical Survey of the Island of Hokkaido (Japan) for 1875. M. S. Day. New York. 4to, illus. *Hart*.

Trade and Navigation Accounts for October. (Parliamentary Report). London. 8vo. 5d.

Transportation Route along the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers in the State of Wisconsin, between the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan. Report on —, Gouverneur K. Warren. —. Washington. 8vo. *Gov. Printing Office*.

War, Franco-German —, 1870-71. First Part: History of the War, to the Downfall of the Empire. Second Volume (Sections 6 to 9): from the Battle of Gravelotte to the Downfall of the Empire, with case of Maps and Plans. Trans. from German official Account, by F. C. H. Clarke. London. 8vo. 22s.

Water Companies. Metropolitan—Account for 1875. (Parliamentary Report.) London. 8vo. 5d.

Wood Conversion by Machinery. John Richards. London. 8vo, illus. *Spons* (New York). \$1.50.

Worsted Pieces; Holdsworth's ready Reckoner for Hanks in worsted Pieces, being Tables giving the net Yarn in Hanks required in Pieces from 5 to 50 Picks per quarter Inch. 15 to 80 Inches in Width, and 1 to 100 in Length. Bradford. 8vo. (*Simpkin, London*). 21s.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY for the next three months will be held as follows: regular meetings, when ballots for members will be canvassed, and other business done, Wednesday, February 7th, March 7th, and April 4th; and stated meetings, for consideration of professional topics and enjoyment of social intercourse, Wednesday, February 21st, March 21st, and April 18th—each at 8 o'clock P. M.

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTION during the same term for the transaction of regular business, will be held February 7th, March 7th, and April 4th, at 3 o'clock P. M.

At the next regular meeting of the Society (February 7th), ballots for members, and upon the appointment of a Committee to report to the Society a form of Memorial to Congress in furtherance of the adoption of metric standards, will be canvassed. A paper by Henry F. Walling, C. E., of Boston, Mass., on "Co-Ordinate Surveying," will be presented. "Some Facts and Opinions relating to Failure of the Railway Bridge at Ashtabula,

Ohio," will be considered, and other business done.

A General (Quarterly) Meeting of the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MINING ENGINEERS will be held in New York, beginning Tuesday, Feb. 27th next, at 8 o'clock P. M. The first, and probably other sessions, will be at the rooms of the Society. It is proposed to have a joint meeting of the two associations before the final adjournment; announcement of the order of arrangements will be made in due time.

RATES OF POSTAGE on transient matter sent to the Society from domestic post-offices, except New York, are as follows:

On books, pamphlets, periodicals, maps and corrected proof sheets, one cent per two ounces; on photographs, lithographs, and engravings, one cent per ounce; and on letters and other mail matter, either wholly or partly in writing (except corrected proofs), sealed packages, or those wrapped so as not to be conveniently examined without destroy-

ing the wrapper, *three cents per half ounce*. The sender may write or print his address in or on a package, and state names and number of articles enclosed, without extra charge.

Matter upon which not enough postage is prepaid, is charged on delivery with *once or twice* the deficiency, according to class; and it is not infrequent that from \$0.50 to \$5.00 is thus charged.

The attention of members is called to these conditions. Generally, it is better to forward a package by express when the postage thereon exceeds \$0.35, or the rating is uncertain.

PAPERS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED for presentation to the Society, since the last announcement, as follows:

Levees, a Discussion, (incomplete).

George W. R. Bayley. January 11th, 1877.
Co-Ordinate Surveying.

Henry F. Walling. January 23d, 1877.

TITLE PAGE AND LIST OF CONTENTS of Volume V. Transactions are issued herewith; a topical Index of Volume I, Proceedings, will be published in February Journal, there not having been time for its preparation earlier.

LIST OF MEMBERS.

ADDITIONS.

	Date of Election.
BATTERSON, JAMES G. [F.] Hartford, Conn.....	June 7, 1876.
MENDELL, GEORGE H.....	Maj. of Engs., U. S. A.....Sept. 6, "

CHANGES AND CORRECTIONS.

BECKWITH, ARTHUR.....	Room 54, Coal and Iron Exchange, Cortlandt and Church streets, New York.
BECKWITH, LEONARD F....	Prest. Fire Proof Building Co. of New York, Room 54, Coal and Iron Exchange, Cortlandt and Church streets, New York.
BILLIN, CHARLES E.....	Box 2580, Philadelphia, Pa.
BOUSEAREN, L. G. F.....	Cons. Eng. Cincinnati Southern R'y, Cincinnati, O.
BROOKS, THOMAS B.....	Monroe, N. Y.
CORTHELL, ELMER L.....	South Pass Jetty Co., 122 Common street, New Orleans, La.
DARRACH, CHARLES G.....	3906 Woodlawn street, W. Philadelphia, Pa.
DOANE, EDWIN A.....	Myrth Block, East Fifth and Utica streets, Oswego, N. Y.
FORD, ARTHUR L.....	80 West Sixth street, Oswego, N. Y.
KENNEDY, JAMES C.....	Care William Kennedy & Sons, Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada.
PETERSON, PETER A.....	Ch'f Eng. Q. M. O. & O. R'y, Montreal, Canada.
POST, ANDREW J.....	136 Magnolia ave., Jersey City Heights, N. J.
SEDGWICK, THOMAS S.....	732 Twenty-first street, N. W., Washington, D. C.
STAATS, ROBERT P.....	349 West Fourteenth street, New York.